(10)

A

LETTER

TO

A FRIEND,

CONCERNING

THE EFFECTS

OF THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION

UPON

THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

By PHILO-PATRIÆ.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR RICHARD EDWARDS, No. 142,
NEW BOND STREET.

1792.

A LETTER, &c.

DEAR SIR,

AN Obſervation has been often made, which contains ſome truth in it, " that the people of this Kingdom are all politicians." The affairs of the nation are often diſcuſſed and ſettled in a coffee-houſe, or an ale-houſe, as well as at private tables. The meaſures of government, and the conduct of miniſters, are very freely cenſured, if not found to correſpond with the ideas of theſe deep ſtateſmen: who think it their birth-right privilege, not only to enquire into, and to give their opinion upon, what is doing in the ſtate; but alſo to have ſome hand in the execution of it. This may be very harmleſs, when confined within due bounds; and may ſerve to employ the minds of ſome, in an innocent way, who would otherwiſe, probably, be engaged in miſchief. Their ſage remarks, no doubt, often raiſe a ſmile on the countenance of thoſe, who tranſact the arduous affairs of

government, when they have leiſure enough to relax from their labours, ſo far as to attend to their obſervations.

But this ſpirit of curious enquiry into the buſineſs of the ſtate, and of free cenſure of the meaſures of government, is not at all times equally harmleſs; eſpecially if not well timed. It is ſometimes productive of much miſchief; and cauſes thoſe commotions in the land, which are not ſo eaſily allayed as excited: like the undulation cauſed by the wind upon the ſea; which, though at firſt gentle, and not at all alarming, by its continuance, may increaſe the agitation of the waters, till a tempeſt is raiſed; threatening any veſſel that may be upon it with utter deſtruction.

You cannot but anticipate, that theſe introductory obſervations, which your late enquiries have occaſioned, will be followed by ſome reflections upon *the effects which the Revolution of France has had upon the people of this country.* Effects no leſs ſurpriſing than dangerous to the peace and tranquility of the ſtate. There can be no doubt, that the liberty which we enjoy, like all rich and fertile ſoils, will ever be productive

ductive of ſome luxuriant branches, and rank weeds of licentiouſneſs; which require the ſkill and pruning knife of the ſtate gardeners, to lop off and keep under; leſt they ſhould injure the growth of that invaluable plant. It is not to be wondered at, that the people ſhould watch, with unremitting jealouſy and care, the conduct of thoſe, who either have it in their power, or ſeem inclined, to rob them of this bleſſing: nor can a prudent caution not to loſe it, be deemed at all criminal, but is rather commendable in them.

It cannot be denied, however, that we have many in this country, who watch all opportunities to diſturb the minds of the people, and to excite groundleſs ſuſpicions; by miſrepreſenting the conduct of the Miniſtry, and endeavouring by all means, to create factions and cauſe commotions; in hope that anarchy and confuſion may enſue, and that they ſhall better themſelves in the general ſcramble. Such men will ever avail themſelves of the opportunity which the diſorders of other ſtates may afford them, of comparing the circumſtances of thoſe ſtates with theſe of our own, (however diſſimilar they may be,)

be,) and ſtrive to deceive the people into a belief, that the ſame reaſons for diſcontent and inſurrection exiſt among us. Were not this the caſe, could any ſenſible perſon be led to think, that the Revolution in France, and the conſequent diſorders of that country, ſhould occaſion any uneaſineſs in the minds of the people of this; as if we had any of the oppreſſions to be relieved from, which they endured under their late arbitrary form of government? Who is there but would rejoice at their emancipation from any kind of tyranny they may have laboured under; although they cannot but diſapprove of the horrid means that have been uſed to effect it.

That the minds of the people of this kingdom ſhould be ſo unhinged by ſuch an event, as they appear to be, is ſomewhat ſurpriſing; when it is conſidered that we already enjoy all the bleſſings of liberty, which the moſt ſanguine expectations of the ſenſible people of this country could, at any time, aſpire after. What greater freedom can be wiſhed for than we poſſeſs? The conſtitution ſecures to us all that we know what to do with: and all that the people complain of,

ariſes

ariſes from the abuſe of it. More liberty would only degenerate, in the hands of thoſe who abuſe what they already have, into downright licentiouſneſs; producing more evils, probably, than a leſs degree of it than we now poſſeſs. For as few men know how to manage their money to advantage; and it requires a good degree of experience joined with prudence, to qualify them for it; ſo it is with reſpect to liberty: ſome reſtraints are abſolutely neceſſary, to enable the generality of the people to enjoy the bleſſings of it; being prone to pervert them to their injury or ruin.

We have lately heard much of the *Natural Rights of Man;* and many utopian notions have been propagated among us concerning them. The *real Rights of Man* are very few indeed: unleſs a country could be found, where men ſpring up like muſhrooms, without any form of government, any laws, or rules, by which to regulate their conduct. If ſuch were found, they may talk loudly for a time, of their "natural Rights;" till they had ſurrendered them into the hands of thoſe among them, who know

know how to eſtimate them, and deal them out to them better than they could themſelves. For they muſt all paſs through the mint of the form of government they may chance to fix on; being at firſt in the crude ore of uncultivated nature, and requiring the crucible and fire of hard diſcipline, to give them currency, before they are fit for uſe and general benefit. But every man's Rights who is born a member of civil ſociety, muſt be determined by the laws of that community, as ſoon as he has an exiſtence. This is the caſe of every one who is born in a civilized ſtate, or where any form of government exiſts: he has no Rights but what were fixed for him before he breathed in this world. Indeed barbarians have ſome laws and rules among them, which determine, in ſome meaſure, the Rights of the ſubjects of the country to which they belong. And this muſt ever be the caſe, ſo long as any ſocieties exiſt: whether of a ſmaller or a larger kind; whether private or corporate, or a whole ſtate.

But a certain *Sorcereſs*, a lady of a very meretricious appearance, and captivating charms,

charms, has lately bewitched the minds of many of the people of this kingdom; and has led them to conceive ſtrange notions of their being different people from what they really are, and once knew themſelves to be. Her name is EQUALITY: a ſly, artful, inſinuating ſtrumpet, who deceives the people with her wiles, tempts them to her embraces, and then robs them of their reaſon and common ſenſe together: ſo that having been in her company, and received from her the inchanting cup, which ſhe preſents to all her votaries, they immediately conceive themſelves to be as great as a lord: and who dares ſay a king or an emperor is their ſuperior? Intoxicated thus, what wonder would it be, if the common people were to be guilty of the greateſt irregularities? But to be ſerious and to drop all metaphor: is it not ſtrange, that any men of common underſtanding ſhould be thus deluded? They are told they are all upon an equality with the greateſt men upon the earth: but if they reflect a moment, will they not aſk, wherein this equality conſiſts? and what benefit they are to derive from it? Will they not expect ſome ſubſtance as well as ſhadow? What good will it do a poor

man, who has a wife and a large family, for whom he can ſcarcely, by his labour, provide food and cloathing, when in health; and when in ſickneſs, is in the utmoſt poverty and diſtreſs; what good, I ſay, will it do ſuch a man to tell him, he is upon an equality with the 'squire of the place for whom he labours? Will he not think he is mocked by the perſon who ſhould tell him ſo? And may not weak minds who entertain ſuch notions, be tempted to think, that if they be equal to thoſe who are in more affluent circumſtances than themſelves, they have a right to ſome of their property; as much at leaſt as they feel the want of; and ſo at length be induced to take it by force? I am really aſtoniſhed, that the propagators of theſe abſurd notions do not ſee their evil tendency, and are not more cautious how they ſtimulate the populace to diſturb the peace of the nation.

" But ſtill there is ſufficient cauſe for diſ-
" content among the people," ſay our modern reformers. " The government of theſe
" kingdoms is not carried on as the conſtitu-
" tion directs it ſhould be; and it is daily un-
" dermined

"dermined by our miniſters, who certainly "mean to enſlave us." The irrefragable proof of this is, we have a corrupt Houſe of Commons, a majority of which is always at the miniſters beck, to enable him to vote away our money, to lay heavy taxes upon us, and to oppreſs us, to . . . to . . . to —— There is no end to their wickedneſs; no knowing where they will ſtop.—What will become of us!—O ſhameful men! to attempt, in broad day-light, to abuſe the people ſo; and to ruin the nation! Surely we are a ruined people already; are we not? We have no money, no trade, no commerce; the change and ſhops are ſhut up; the graſs grows in the ſtreets; good eating and drinking are at an end; the people you meet in the ſtreets, are half ſtarved; even aldermen appear with lank bodies and long faces; they are mere ſhadows, through the want of their former feaſtings, which they cannot now afford; and we are ſo burthened with taxes, that there is no ſuch thing as living as we uſed to do.—Is this really the caſe with us? or is not the reverſe of all this the truth? Yet this is the picture which is often drawn of our country. Complainers ever take delight in miſrepreſenting

the ſtate of the nation, and in ſhewing us always the dark ſide. Theſe croakers are to be met with in abundance; and ſuch there ever will be, ſo long as needy men neglect to uſe the means pointed out to them by Providence, by which they may get a decent maintenance. But they want to live without labour: and hence are all their complaints. A friend of mine conſiders all ſuch complainers to be men of deſperate circumſtances.

It may be worth while to make ſome ſlight enquiry into the alledged cauſes of theſe complaints: and we will begin with the Houſe of Commons. This, they ſay, is corrupt. The members who are deemed ſo, are, I ſuppoſe, thoſe who have got into Parliament by means of bribery and corruption. Surely theſe men, if ſuch there be, are very fit repreſentatives of thoſe who took bribes to elect them. If a majority, therefore, in any city, town, or borough, are corrupt enough to be bought, they are very properly repreſented by the buyer; and they have no reaſon to complain, but of their own corruption. "But there are many rotten boroughs, "and the members of theſe are eaſily bought,

"to

" to vote with the miniſter at his mandate." Well; ſuppoſe theſe rotten boroughs were lopped off, and the populous towns, which at preſent ſend no members to parliament, were repreſented; which is a topick our reformers of repreſentation are ever talking of: could they inſure the election of uncorrupt members in their ſtead? If not, what advantage ſhould we have by the alteration?

That the Houſe of Commons is corrupt, cannot be doubted; ſince one of the moſt eminent of its members, one who is ſo attached to the popular cauſe, as to be ſtiled *the man of the people*, has publickly declared, it coſt him, or rather his party, forty thouſand pounds, to ſecure his election to a ſeat in it. And corrupt it always will continue, ſo long as any corruption of nature remains in the hearts of men. Such is the ſtate of human nature, that men are neither immaculate, nor infallible: to expect perfection, therefore, in ſuch a number of men as compoſe the Houſe, would be no leſs weak than in vain. But permit me to ſay, I think it is no more corrupt now than it has heretofore been, and that it is much more virtuous than

it

it was at various periods. " But the miniſter " has ſo many places in his gift, that, by frequently " the diſpoſal of them, he can ~~always~~ ſe- " cure a majority in the Houſe: ſome by " poſſeſſion, and others by hope of reward, " are prompted to ſide with him in all his " meaſures." I am free to acknowledge, that this may be the caſe: and if it were not ſo, there would be no permanency, no ſtability, in any miniſtry; but we ſhould be ever diſtracted with continual changes, to the total interruption of publick buſineſs. For a few artful, deſigning men, within doors and without, may ſo miſrepreſent the meaſures of government, as not only to deceive the people at large, but the Houſe alſo for a time; ſo that without ſome ſuch dead weight in the ſcale of the miniſtry to render it ſtable, it would be liable to be agitated by every wind of oppoſition; and they would be obliged to quit their ſtations, perhaps to the confuſion of all publick affairs. This, therefore, which is complained of as an evil, is, of two, the leaſt.

But the popular complaints reſt not here. So much has Monarchy been decried of late,

and

and eſpecially in a neighbouring country, that the flame of diſcontent has reached us; and we are told, in a celebrated pamphlet, which has been read with great avidity by the people of this kingdom, " that there is no occa- " ſion for Kings: we can do very well with- " out them." I ſhould not wonder if we were ſhortly told alſo, that men have no need of heads; that their bodies and limbs can do very well without them.

The origin of kingly power is of very ancient date. An antique book, of ſome eſteem with certain men, informs us, that it is of divine appointment; and that kings are inveſted with power to be vicegerents and repreſentatives of the Deity upon earth. For this book declares, that " the powers that be, are ordained of God:" and commands " that every ſoul " ſhould be ſubject to the higher powers." But ſuch ſtale, obſolete precepts are not to be regarded in theſe days of ſuperior light and refinement. I am informed there are ſome men among us, that make a profeſſion of the religion contained in this book, who have imbibed the notion that kings are unneceſſary. If ſuch there be, I would adviſe them,

them, either to renounce their opinions, or to burn their bibles: for no man, I will venture to aſſert, could ever pretend he derived ſuch opinions from the ſcriptures of truth. In reply to this, I may probably be told, it is certain, kings were of divine appointment; for it is written, "God gave the people a "king in his wrath:" meaning, no doubt, in theſe mens opinion, as a curſe. But let ſuch wiſeacres be informed, that God's wrath was kindled againſt them, not merely for their aſking a king, but becauſe they were tired of a Theocracy: they had firſt caſt off the Lord from being their king, and had rejected his government.

In the book beforementioned, which is rather above the comprehenſion of our modern reformers of government, we read of a *kingdom above*, which conſiſts of *thrones*, *dominions*, *principalities*, and *powers*; beſides the throne of the Moſt High: which ſurely imply different ranks, and a ſubordination. It may, therefore, be fairly preſumed, that the Great Supreme, who governs in both worlds, and often refers to the kingdoms of this, cannot be diſpleaſed at the forms of government

government here below reſembling that above; but rather, that it is agreeable to his divine will that they ſhould do ſo. He is alſo ſtiled King of kings, and Lord of lords: but if there be no kings, no lords, he muſt either loſe this title, or be without this claſs of his ſubjects. What will our *levellers*, our *anti-monarchical* gentlemen, ſay to this? Upon their own principles, they cannot be candidates for becoming ſubjects of a kingdom which is ſo conſtituted; nor can they have any hopes of ever obtaining a place in it. For unleſs all are upon a level there, or if there be ſuch a being as a king in it, they will have no concern with it. Indeed, as they perfectly agree in ſentiment, they will be more fit companions of *him*, who, diſdaining to be inferior, aimed to be like "the Moſt High;" and was caſt down to a place that ſhall be nameleſs, for his preſumption. Let all ſuch *levellers* hear, and fear, and tremble; leſt they ſhare the ſame fate with their renowned predeceſſor of old.

"But kings have been tyrants."—granted, that ſome have been;—"and therefore all muſt be ſo." Excellent logick! if this be the

 inference,

inference. It might, with as much propriety, be argued; ſome men have been diſhoneſt, and have been hanged for it; therefore, all men muſt be ſo. But what kings have been tyrants? In abſolute monarchies, it is admitted, bad kings may become tyrants: but in ſuch a limited monarchy as ours, they could not, if they were even diſpoſed to be ſo. Is there a ſhadow of ſuch a diſpoſition diſcovered in our reigning Monarch? What can king-haters themſelves find in him to excite their hatred or reſentment? In what relation in life does he fail, or fall under the cenſure of the unprejudiced? As a huſband, a parent, a maſter, a friend, by whom is he excelled? Is he not condeſcending to the meaneſt of his ſubjects; and ready to relieve the diſtreſſed and afflicted, whoſe caſes are faithfully repreſented to him? But it may be ſaid, "theſe are good qualities, and very "amiable in a private gentleman." If ſo, they are, at leaſt, a good foundation for the character of a king.

Let us, therefore, proceed in our enquiries, and ſee whether theſe qualities of the *man* be hid or loſt in thoſe of the *monarch*. Does he

he not govern his people with mildneſs, gentleneſs, and affection? Does he not diſcover, on various occaſions, an anxiety for the welfare and proſperity of his kingdoms; and uſe all the means in his power to that end? Is he not an indefatigable promoter of the arts and ſciences; and do they not flouriſh under his foſtering hand? Should any pretend to doubt, whether all theſe queſtions might be anſwered in the affirmative, and whether it were not the general ſenſe of the nation within a ſhort time; let them advert to a late inſtance of the loyalty and affection of his people; when their demonſtrations of joy roſe to a height, far exceeding all that the page of hiſtory ever before recorded: I mean, when the memorable event took place, of our beloved monarch's recovery from the malady, with which it had pleaſed God, for infinitely wiſe ends, no doubt, to afflict him; and in him, the whole nation: when all ſtrove to excel each other in proofs of their affection and joy. And, laſtly, I would aſk, whether the character of the man and the monarch be not crowned and perfected with undefiled religion? with a reverence for the worſhip and honour of the true God; making

the fear and love of him the ground and motive of his general conduct? verifying the ſentiment of the poet,

" That kings rule beſt, when mindful to obey."

But after all, you know, Sir, ſome have meanly ſaid, " it is an expence too burthenſome " to the nation, to ſupport the dignity and " ſplendour of a king: an expence that might " be ſaved"—"Nine hundred thouſand pounds " a year is too much for any one man to have " the diſpoſal of." Would not any one think, from ſuch illiberal remarks, that this ſaid 900,000l. was annually collected together in bank notes, put into an air balloon, toſſed into the air, and whirled out of the kingdom, no body knows whither? Is not that whole ſum expended among us; and circulated through the kingdom in a variety of channels, productive of much good? So far from the whole ſum being at the king's diſpoſal, a very ſmall part of it only is: it being under the direction of parliament, how the chief part of it ſhall be expended. Without attempting to penetrate into private family affairs, or to diſcloſe ſecrets that the publick have nothing to do with, I would refer thoſe men, who object to the expenditure of the

civil

civil liſt revenue, to only one act of parliament; that which is uſually diſtinguiſhed by, " Mr. Burke's bill." In which the various payments of this revenue are claſſed under different heads, in the manner in which they ſhall be paid; and are arranged as follow.

1ſt. " The penſions and allowances of the " Royal Family."

2. " The ſalaries of the Lord High " Chancellor of Great Britain; the Lord " Keeper, or Lords Commiſſioners of the " Great Seal; the Speaker of the Houſe of " Commons; and the Judges of the Courts " of King's Bench and Common Pleas, and " Barons of the Exchequer, &c. &c."

3. " The ſalaries of Miniſters of foreign " courts, being reſident at the ſaid courts."

4. " The approved bills of all tradeſmen, " artificers and labourers, for any articles " ſupplied, or work done, for His Majeſty's " ſervice."

5. " The menial ſervants in His Majeſty's " houſhold."

6. " The penſion liſt, beginning with the " ſmalleſt penſions."

" 7. The

7. " The ſalaries of all the places payable " out of the civil liſt revenue: beginning " with the loweſt."

8. " The ſalaries and penſions of the High " Treaſurer, or Commiſſioners of the Treaſury, " and Chancellor of the Exchequer."

Few, I believe, ever thought that many of the above articles were paid out of the civil liſt revenue: for many conceive that the money is ſpent chiefly in luxury, diſſipation, and extravagance. Let it be alſo remembered, that the three great domeſtick departments muſt, of neceſſity, be attended with a very conſiderable expence, in providing accommodations for ſo large a family: I mean the departments of, the Lord Steward of the Houſhold, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Maſter of the Horſe. To which I would add, the Board of Works; the expence of which, in ſupporting and keeping in repair all the palaces with their appendages, and ſometimes rebuilding houſes, muſt be very great.

Heretofore kings were conſidered in a very different light from what they are by ſome at preſent. The grandeur, ſplendour, and dignity

of

of a king, were thought, and very juſtly too, to exhibit to publick view, and to the world at large, the greatneſs and opulence of the people over whom he reigned: or, to uſe a celebrated phraſe, though in a ſomewhat different ſenſe, a king repreſented, or truly was, *the Majeſty of the people;* in whom it all concentered, and to whom it was really delegated.

But now it is diſcovered that a Republican government is better than a monarchical. If they can point out clearly the advantages of the former above thoſe of the latter, there might be ſome reaſon for their wiſhing for the change: but this, I am perſuaded, they cannot do. Such advantages, however, ought to be very great indeed, ſince the alteration could not be made, without ſacrificing the peace and tranquility of the nation, with many other benefits which we at preſent enjoy; if it were not attended with infinitely worſe conſequences. Let them ſhew, if they can, any government now exiſting in Europe, under which the people enjoy ſo many bleſſings, and ſo great privileges, (*liberty*, the idol of the day, at the head of them,) as the people of this

this land at preſent enjoy; notwithſtanding our great abuſe of them. In proof of the abuſe of liberty, let the violated *preſs* groan out its inſolent and inflammatory evidence; and *the carricature print-ſhop* exhibit its teſtimony, in all the wanton luxuriance of licentious imagery. From theſe no character is ſo ſacred as to eſcape unridiculed, unvilified.

That form of government which is found upon the whole, having had the ſanction of experience, to be beſt calculated, to inſure ſubordination to the civil power and obedience to the laws, and to ſecure the lives, characters, and property of the ſubjects, is indiſputably the beſt. And I am free to confeſs, I think an *hereditary monarchical government*, conſtituted as that of Great Britain is, to be ſuch an one. It would be entering into too large a field of diſcuſſion, to give you all my reaſons for this preference. I would, however, adviſe thoſe who are diſſatisfied with our government, to leave the management of ſtate affairs to abler heads than their own: for the ſcience of government is above the reach of ordinary capacities; and I fear they would rather mar than mend what they find

fault

fault with, were they to attempt an alteration.

You will not ſuſpect me of being a candidate for court favour, or that I aim to be the panegyriſt of the King or his Miniſters, if I freely give you my opinion of the latter, as I have already done of the former. Whatever others may do, you will impute my conduct to nobler motives, ſuppoſe that it flows from principle, and give me credit for the ſincerity of what I write. Many artful and deſigning men, as well as ſome vile incendiaries, are ever vilifying the miniſtry, and miſrepreſenting their meaſures: by which means the people have been much deceived, and diſcontents have been raiſed among them. I therefore think it my duty, as a peaceful ſubject, and a lover of my country, to uſe all the means in my power, within the narrow ſphere in which I move, to counteract ſuch nefarious practices; ſo pregnant with the greateſt evils. Hoping thereby to ſatisfy the minds of ſome, at leaſt, that the preſent meaſures of government are dictated by wiſdom, and calculated to promote the publick good; and that nothing of an arbitrary or

an oppreſſive nature can juſtly be imputed to them: their errors being thoſe only of fallible men.

That the Miniſtry are, in general, men of ability, and competent to the offices they fill, cannot be denied. And that he who principally guides the helm of our publick affairs, is a ſkilful pilot, and every way qualified for his important ſtation, his opponents are conſtrained to admit. With reſpect to their integrity; ſhould any doubt it, let them point out the ſame number of men of equal abilities, who excel them in that neceſſary qualification; and I will admit the juſtice of our complainants ſuſpicions and inſinuations upon this head, which they ſo induſtriouſly propagate. But if no incapacity, nothing criminal in act or intention, can juſtly be laid to their charge; if the nation be in a proſperous condition, which none can deny; and if we really be in the full enjoyment of the bleſſings of liberty, peace, plenty, and ſecurity, which is no leſs certain—what muſt we think of thoſe men, who aſſiduouſly endeavour to diſturb the tranquility of the kingdom, and to ſow the ſeeds of ſedition;

by

by inſinuating notions and principles into the minds of the people, which muſt, in their operations, be ſubverſive of all order, and productive of anarchy and confuſion: leading them to think the government, under which they live, to be a bad one, and their rulers to be treacherous men; thereby exciting them to ſeek a change of both? Surely ſuch men ought to be held in the utmoſt deteſtation, and deemed the enemies of their country. Let them, therefore, be ſhunned as the peſt of ſociety, and be branded with the infamy they deſerve.

You alſo intimated a deſire to know my ſentiments reſpecting the preſent Oppoſition: I have always thought it a delicate ſubject to touch upon; as it requires great diſcrimination, leſt thoſe who act from principle, ſhould be involved in the ſame cenſure with thoſe who act without any. For it muſt be acknowledged, there are in the preſent, as well as in former oppoſitions, many men in both houſes of great reſpectability of character, for probity, ability, opulence, and weight; whoſe influence on either ſide would be very conſiderable. But herein lies the myſtery, how

ſuch men ſhould be ſo influenced by a party ſpirit, or their connexions, as to be induced to act almoſt invariably againſt miniſtry. That it ſhould be ſo, is a thing much to be lamented: and it puts our candour to the utmoſt ſtretch, to ſuppoſe they always act herein from principle: for I cannot entertain ſo poor an opinion of their underſtandings, as to think they really diſapprove *all* the meaſures which they oppoſe.

An open, candid, manly oppoſition, which may operate as a teſt to try the meaſures of miniſtry by, I have ever conſidered as rather commendable than otherwiſe. But when oppoſition degenerates ſo far into a party ſpirit, as to determine them to oppoſe all meaſures, right or wrong; when their oppoſition is accompanied with the bittereſt invectives, and the moſt ſcurrilous, illiberal language; when, like a pack of blood-hounds in full cry, they purſue and ſtrive to hunt down the miniſter, and oblige him and his colleagues to quit their poſts—ſuch an oppoſition I conſider as a curſe to this country; unleſs the cauſe, which is very ſeldom the caſe, be fully ſuffi-

cient

cient to juſtify ſuch conduct. I ſay nothing of the needy, unprincipled ſet of men, who have nothing in view but the loaves and the fiſhes, and are ready to vote on either ſide, as intereſt leads them: theſe are ſcarcely worth my notice.

But notwithſtanding all the ſeverity which the preſent Miniſter has experienced from oppoſition, I really think they may be conſidered as his beſt friends. For they have called forth, on various occaſions, ſuch juſtifications of his conduct and meaſures, and ſuch developments of his plans for the publick good, as have made them ſhine with greater luſtre than they would otherwiſe have done. This has been the conſequence of their oppoſition, however differently it might have been intended by them.

One great evil ariſing from oppoſition, which ought to be ſeriouſly attended to at preſent, is, the encouragement they give to the populace to murmur and complain, by their acrimonious, violent ſpeeches in parliament againſt miniſtry. Hence ariſe thoſe factious cabals at ſocieties, clubs, taverns, and coffee-houſes.

houſes. Hence alſo thoſe diſaffected toaſts at their meetings; which to ſuffer with impunity, is a diſgrace to *government*. And hence among others, that celebrated one, of *the majeſty of the people*; which, in my opinion, is nothing leſs than conſtructive *treaſon*. For while the throne is filled, and the *real Majeſty* of the nation, or of the people, if they like the phraſe better, is centered in the perſon that fills it; they are nothing ſhort of *traitors*, that talk of any other majeſty of the people, and deſerve to be dealt with as ſuch. You know, when my indignation is excited, I am apt to uſe pretty ſtrong expreſſions: but thoſe I have now uſed, are not too ſtrong, I preſume, for the occaſion.

But after all, what, I would aſk, have we to do with the French nation, or their Revolution? Let them accompliſh what they have begun, and eſtabliſh what form of government they pleaſe. I will venture to predict, that we ſhall ſtill hold the ſame reſpectable, important, enviable ſituation among the powers of Europe, that we have hitherto done: unleſs by our own internal diviſions and commotions, we ſhould ſo weaken the ſtate,

that

that we become an eaſy prey to any of our future enemies. If the French Conſtitution, whatever it may be, ſhould, in ſome unimportant points, have the advantage of our own, which is the utmoſt, I am perſuaded, that it can do; would it be adviſeable, in order to obtain ſuch advantage, to run the riſk of incurring the ſame anarchy, confuſion, maſſacres, and bloodſhed, which that unhappy nation has lately experienced. God forbid! that we ſhould ever be ſo unwiſe, or be ſo given up by Him; which I conceive to be their real ſituation at preſent. They ſeem to have forſaken God, and he is now ſcourging them for their wickedneſs and impiety. May we take warning before it is too late!

I flatter myſelf you will give me credit, my dear Sir, for the readineſs with which I have complied with your requeſt, and the freedom with which I have given you my ſentiments upon the ſubjects you propoſed to me, at our laſt interview. You ſee I have occaſionally introduced the ſentiments and opinions, and often the very language, which, you informed me, were adopted by thoſe who approve of the whole of the

the French Revolution, and of the form of government which they are about to eſtabliſh. Unwilling to exhauſt your patience entirely, I forbear to mention many things, which I think are highly criminal in thoſe among us, who murmur and complain without ſufficient cauſe, or indeed without any cauſe at all; and whoſe evident intention it is, to excite the people to ſeek a change of government. I therefore conclude with my moſt fervent prayer, that we may long enjoy the bleſſings of our ineſtimable Conſtitution in church and ſtate; that our good and gracious King may long live to ſway the ſceptre of theſe kingdoms; and that we may never be permitted ſo to abuſe either our civil or religious liberty, as to provoke the divine Author of all our bleſſings to deprive us of them.

PHILO-PATRIÆ.